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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: U.S.-RUSSIA RELATIONS

Summary: Taiwan's major Chinese-language dailies focused news coverage July 10 on the Department of Health's test results of the frying oil of major fast food chains in Taipei County; on developments in cross-Straits relations; and on the legal cases involving former President Chen Shui-bian and his family. The pro-independence "Liberty Times" devoted half of its page two to discussing the tenth anniversary of the "special state-to-state" doctrine proposed by former President Lee Teng-hui in 1999 regarding Taiwan's relations with China and the evolution of cross-Straits relations since then. In terms of editorials and commentaries, a column in the centrist, KMT-leaning "China Times" discussed U.S. President Barack Obama's recent visit to Russia. The article said the chances are slim that Russia will be treated as an equal of the United States. End summary.

"How Can Russia Expect to Be Treated as an Equal of the United States?"

The "International Lookout" column in the centrist, KMT-leaning "China Times" [circulation: 120,000] wrote (7/10):

"... On the surface, [U.S. President] Barack Obama appeared to be very polite and engage Russia on an equal and reciprocal footing during his visit to Moscow; he also said he wants to improve relations with Russia. But Obama did not make any concession at all during his talks [with Russian President Dmitry Medvedev]. ... The United States and Russia want to improve their bilateral relations, but how? For two countries to have close relations, they must have close economic relations. Yet for many years, the [annual] trade [volume] between the United States and Russia has merely maintained at a level of ten to twenty billion U.S. dollars, an amount which is not even up to one tenth of the [annual] trade volume between China and the United States. [Also,] to improve bilateral relations [the two countries] must remove any imbalance in their geopolitical interests. But given the distance between the two nations and their respective [international] status, the chances are slim for the United States and Russia to stand on an equal footing.

"Washington's deepest and only concern about Moscow is the latter's missiles with nuclear warheads. The United States is proposing that nuclear weapons be abolished around the globe. Once such a goal is realized [and if Russia keeps its weapons,] Russia will be harshly criticized."

WANG